

Oral History of George Ramondo
Interviewed by: John Hughes, and Bob Hornback of WSCHS
And Liza Pernunski of *Circuit Rider Productions*
At Pellini Chevrolet, Sebastopol
February 6, 1981
Transcribed by Steve Stedman, WSCHS, 2012
Edited from earlier transcription, WSCHS, 2014

Hughes: I don't know exactly where to start. I guess, maybe, with your starting up a business relationship with Mr. Burbank—when did that start and how. There's no real structure, but maybe the best way would be kind of chronologically.

Ramondo: In 1940, the fellow she (Mrs. Luther Burbank) had running the place for her had asthma and he had to leave the area, here. He had to go to a different climate. I knew Mrs. Burbank, so I knew he was leavin'. So I went over to her house...

Hughes: You were in the apple business, right?

Ramondo: I was in the apple business. I went over to her house in Santa Rosa and said I would like to lease her orchards. She had two orchards. She had the one here and there was one on Bloomfield Road.

Hughes: Is that the Hurst place?

Ramondo: What is the Hurst place now.

Hughes: She bought that after Burbank died, didn't she?

Ramondo: Yeah. Actually that ten acre block of orchard on Bloomfield Road; her sister was sort of a partner with her on that.

Hughes: How did what's left of the... Where the house is and the experiments and the barn and all that was essentially left and the other remaining acres were in apples, eleven or twelve acres where the housing project is?

Ramondo: (Consulting plot map) Yeah where the experimental... The place kind of runs... It was sort of square, like the whole parcel there. And the driveway kind of come in like this. Here was the house and here was an experimental, I don't know what you want to call it, shed or barn over there...

Hughes: Is that the two story one that Cecil was talking about?

Ramondo: Yeah.

Pernunski: The one that burned?

Ramondo: It's not there anymore. I was up there a while back and it's not standing anymore. I guess they either bulldozed it down or it was burnt, or somethin'. I don't know.

Hughes: And the barn was back further, wasn't it?

Ramondo: No. There was a shed right up here.

Hughes: Wasn't there a big barn at one time, though?

Ramondo: No. No. This up here was just an open shed.

Hughes: Oh, so that's the one they knocked down. Okay, so when they refer to the barn burning down recently that must have been this little structure.

Ramondo: That must have been this, right here. This was a two story deal, here.

Hughes: In the photos we have there was a barn... This is probably way back—it could have gone in the thirties—there was a big one way back up in here. Remember? In to the left?

Hornbeck: I heard the barn, the big barn, had burned down in '75, in 1975.

Piernunski: That's what I...

Ramondo: Well, there's no big barn...

Hughes: So maybe that was what was referred to as the shed, then.

Ramondo: This was just an open shed. It had an open front.

Hughes: Maybe that's what this was then. Maybe what people referred to as a barn was more of a shed than a barn.

Ramondo: This was right next to the house there.

Pernunski: It looks kind of small.

Ramondo: This wasn't that big. It was even smaller, a lot smaller, than the house is.

Hornbeck: Oh, no kidding?

Ramondo: Yeah.

Hughes: We have some pictures. Maybe we could bring them by and you could look at them.

Hornbeck: There's also supposed to have been a small green house. It's on that old map we have from about 1915. I think it was...

Ramondo: I was getting' to that. Now, down in here—along this fence line down here—which they're gone now, I'm sure, there was a whole row of cactus, of edible cactus—the spineless kind that he had...

Hornback: I didn't know there were any cactus out there.

Pernunski: That's where the cemetery is now.

Ramondo: No. No. No. No, the cemetery's up here. Here's the driveway that came in here. Now they made the driveway down here. Right along this fence line here; there was a row of cactus. They used to get about that big, and they were spineless.

Hughes: Uh, huh. What's down there now?

Ramondo: There's nothin' down there now, is there?

Hornback: There's some pineapple quinces back up toward the end. Back up near the edge there. Some roses are about midway along there, and...

Ramondo: Then, let's see, there were two plum trees here, and then there was an almond up here. They had cages around 'em—like a lath cage. And then right in here there were two rows of grapes.

Hughes: Was the rest of the property in apples?

Ramondo: Well, most of—on this side here, of the driveway, as you came in on the driveway—there probably is some still standing there, there was blueberries. Are they still there?

Piernunski: The blueberries are still there.

Ramondo: All right. Then, in this part here, it was rows and rows of... Oh, let's see: there was different kinds of apples; there was peaches, pears, everything in here. I don't know whether they're still standing.

Hornback: There are apples and some pears. No peaches...

Ramondo: No peaches in there any more?

Hornbeck: No peaches at all on the property. There's one plumcot..

Ramondo: Well, down in here there were peaches too. They were sort of scattered around down in here.

Pernunski: What was right here?

Ramondo: Plums...

Hughes: I wonder why he had the cages around 'em? Were they something special?

Ramondo: They were, yeah. They used to get that big. They were great big ones and they weren't the Santa Rosa plum, either. They were something else, I guess, he was working on.

Hughes: And where was Kyle during this time?

Ramondo: Kyle worked out of this shed here, this barn, we were talkin' about.

Hughes: Right, and he was still kind of around and connected with the JC, kind of connected with the farm?

Ramondo: Right. In fact, Kyle, he took care of this here for Stark Brothers.

Hughes: Right. But then was this primarily apples in here, then?

Ramondo: Yeah, this was all apples in here. There was apples off here to the front here, too, which I think there's a few trees standing.

Hughes: Right. Basically, these remained, though. I see. And then when the housing project came along that's when they...

Ramondo: That's when... Right. But all of that was still there.

Hornback: There were supposed to have been some Burbank apple trees somewhere around in here, that were still standing?

Ramondo: Oh, that was the regular orchard...

Hornback: Not part of the orchard that went in after he died. They were trees of his own that went in before. We're trying to find out where they were.

Ramondo: No, not back here. Those were up here, and in here. This was just all Golden Delicious and Red Delicious apples in here. There was nothing else in here.

Hughes: Did Mrs. Burbank come over occasionally to...

Ramondo: Oh yeah. She used to come over; sometimes twice a week, and sometimes once a week. She used to spend a lot of time...

Hughes: That was during what, the '40's?

Ramondo: That was up until the last year I had it. She used to come over and visit all the time.

Hughes: And what was the last year you were there?

Ramondo: '59.

Hughes: '59.

Hornback: Who was it that had the asthma? Would that be Kyle?

Ramondo: No. That was, heck his brother lives right here in town... Let's see... I'll think of that name in a minute... Hodapp, Gordon Hodapp.

Hughes: Is his brother?

Ramondo: No, Gordon is the one that used to run it for her. Herman is Gordon's brother. Herman lives right here in town.

Hughes: Apparently, Herman'd be the one to contact if we wanted to see if Gordon...

Ramondo: Right.

Hughes: What is it about up on Watertrough?

Hornback: Yeah. We were hearing about some Burbank plants or some kind of a house, or something, up on Watertrough Road right near Bodega Highway. We've been hearing a lot about there being some kind of plantings, or him having a house there.

Ramondo: On Watertrough Road?

Hughes: What I thought it was, was there was another fellow like—you know, there's Jim Robinson—and I thought there was another fellow with a Portuguese name, like Silva or something, that lived out on Watertrough and did propagating and ...

Ramondo: Oh, there is! Bill Silva.

Hughes: Silva, yeah.

Ramondo: He's on Watertrough.

Hughes: Doesn't he do a lot of planting?

Ramondo, Yeah.

Hughes: Is he still alive? Is he still out there?

Ramondo: Bill, I think, is dead, but Mrs. Silva's alive.

Hughes: And it was kinda like he and Burbank were competitors, in a sense, trying to develop...

Ramondo: Yeah. In fact, ol' Bill Silva he developed quite a few different things out there...

Hughes: Were they fruit or?

Ramondo: Everything. Roses, all kinds of flowers. Roses...

Hughes: What about Jim Robinson? What was his?

Ramondo: Well...

Hughes: I know he was a little eccentric...

Ramondo: Well, he didn't do too much, there. I really didn't have too much to do with what was going on there.

Hornback: I think I have a reference to Mrs. Silva from somebody who talked to a neighbor of hers so there's a reference there to all that stuff. I just thought I'd try tracking that one down. Apparently, Burbank had plantings all over this county, of his stuff; trying things out in different microclimates and stuff. It's an incredible idea and I'm still trying to track down where the plants ended up...

Ramondo: You see, this little, whatever you want to call it, a barn or what, the upstairs part was where Mr. Burbank kept all his records for that, for what was goin' on there in Sebastopol...

Hughes: Kids used to break into that periodically, didn't they?

Ramondo: Yeah, towards the end there. In fact, we used to change the lock on the door about every other week. Kids'd break in there. They stole a lot of stuff. A lot of the records were gone, and...

Hornbeck: What was the shed in back used for then? The open shed?

Ramondo: Up here? Just for storage. I used to keep my apples boxes and tractor and what not in there.

Hughes: Well, then this must not be the same one that was...

Hornbeck: They said something about that having been moved from elsewhere on the site. That the corporation had moved it after '60 whatever it was. When they started their construction, they put it underneath that tree. It was a little shed, over by the Royal walnut tree.

Hughes: It was a little shed...Not very large...

Ramondo: Oh, that wasn't part... That was the construction company or somebody must have put that up there then...

Hughes: This was a real old one. Somebody said that maybe it was just to get out of the sun or something, or to put some small hand tools in.

Ramondo: There was nothing like that up there. It was all done afterwards. Way, down in this corner, here. Right down here. There was a great big black walnut tree. Is that still there?

Hughes: Yeah.

Ramondo: I used to get about 35 sacks of black walnuts off of that tree.

Hughes: That's where we dug up those ashes. We were looking for a corner marker right at that point. There's supposed to be a pin where the property lines just jogs a little bit and I dug down—I had a metal detector—and we found a box. We didn't know what it was; and we found out it was ashes, it was the remains of somebody. They were buried under there. We've been trying to track down: who, or where, or what. I guess we'll maybe end up giving them back to the coroner. We don't know whether it's a man or a woman; we can't tell. It was back in 1906.

Pernunski: How do you know it was 1906?

Hughes: It was on there. It's inscribed. Somebody scratched it in. The first name was Merrit, which could be a family name for a man or a woman.

Pernunski: Was it one of Burbank's family or was it one of the (unintelligible)?

Hughes: Well, we can't tell. It was right under that tree.

Ramondo: Oh, yeah, another thing which he was famous for is his chestnuts. He developed these blight free chestnut trees. Let's see now. There was one—it may be still standing—right along the highway here. Is that one there still standing? Right. But here there was about four different varieties of 'em. There was a row here, about six in a row here; and then there was a couple over here, and then one down here. And they were blight free.

Hughes: Is that something that chestnuts...

Ramondo: Oh, yeah! They get the blight, right, but these were blight free. This one particular tree that was set to the side over here; the chestnuts were about that big.

Hornback: It seems those chestnuts were very prolific and very large, from what I've seen. I didn't know anything about them. We're trying to find out more about them, about the chestnuts from this area.

Ramondo: In fact, I don't remember the party's name now, they were a nurseryman someplace up the valley someplace, and they had heard about these blight free trees and they came down and asked me if they could get some cuttings off of 'em. I said, "Sure."

Hughes: There's some walnuts down here, right?

Hornback: Right in the very corner, by the fence down here there's like a black walnut; and then there are a lot of walnuts up behind the cottage. I've been trying to figure out where that other structure could have gone? If it was...

Hughes: I think it was kind of over a little bit, maybe to one side. It probably wasn't directly out the back door. Was it over, maybe to the left?

Ramondo: This shed up here?

Hughes: No, this one, here.

Hornback: There's a walnut grove...

Hughes: Maybe it was just scooted over a little bit one way or the other. 'Cuz there's a pretty good grove of walnuts right in there.

Hornback: They're almost right behind the house.

Ramondo: Well, there was some cherries right up in here. Where this shed was, here, there was a row of cherries right here—a couple rows of cherries. Are they still standing?

Hornback: There are some cherries, but they're a strange type I've never seen before.

Ramondo: Well he had all kinds of 'em there that he was experimenting on. Practically every other tree was different.

Hughes: Basically, this area would go unattended, though. Wouldn't it? The main thing was just to take care of the apples and then the...

Ramondo: Right. This area up here really was unattended. Now, this down here, I took care of all of this. I worked the ground up all the time here, but this up here was more or less... Well, I would disc it once or twice, but that was it. But Mr. Kyle used to go over there and kind of trim the trees once in a while...

Hornbeck: Do you happen to know if the gate that's up there now? Is that the original, or?

Ramondo: No! We used to have problems with kids and whatnot drivin' in there all the time, so we put up a gate. No, I'd say there've been about 20 gates put in there since... They'd break the gates down, and we'd just have to build another one. So...

Originally, when I took over there in '59, there was no gate at all.

Hughes: You mean in '40?

Ramondo: Yeah, in '40 there was no gate there, whatsoever. I think it was about eight or ten years after that that we put up a gate there.

Hornback: I couldn't figure out why it seems so different from what we're seeing in the slides of when Burbank was there. It seems like it's on the opposite side...

Ramondo: Yeah, the original gate had probably gone a long time ago, and then it went for years without a gate.

Hornbeck: Do you know anything at all about these lilies? They were right around... Well, their entry road now goes right around here and goes up like this, and the lilies are around in here somewhere, near the apple trees.

Ramondo: There was a row of lilies in there. I'm surprised... I don't know if those are the originals, but there was a row of lilies there.

Hornback: We have some slide of huge plants, with great big trumpets comin' up...

Ramondo: An' then, right up in, oh gosh, right up in here someplace there was two rows of... What do you call it, they make pies out of 'em? They have a green stem, and then long...

Pernunski: Rhubarb?

Ramondo: Rhubarb!

Pernunski: Where were they?

Ramondo: Right in... Right in here someplace. There again, that rhubarb was about that big around, those plants. So maybe he developed it. I don't think anybody knew about those plants. Just like nobody knew about that row of cactus...

Hughes: Were the cactus still there in '59 when you left?

Ramondo: Oh, yes! They were there, I fact—had to be—up until the time they developed that.

Hornback and Pernunski: Rueful laughter.

Hornback: There's no evidence of cactus that I've seen up there at all! I wasn't even sure that he'd done any work with the thornless cactus up there at Gold Ridge at all.

Ramondo: Oh gosh, yeah. That was a big item there. In fact, Mrs. Burbank, every time she'd come over, she'd always pick a big basket full of cactus to bring back home.

Hornback and Pernunski: More rueful laughter.

Pernunski: NUTS!

Hornback: Do you know anything about the thornless blackberries?

Ramondo: No... There wasn't any there that I know of.

Hornback: We found some, in along the entry drive, in amongst the bamboo. Right in through here. And a couple back way over in here, and one stray one over here; but he's supposed to have done a lot of work on the thornless blackberries out there. I was wondering if there's any connection...

Ramondo: I don't remember blackberries.

Hornback: We have blackberries all over the property, but not all of them are thornless.

Ramondo: Yeah, I was going to say that maybe a lot of those grew wild, since, because I don't remember any...

Hughes: You'd probably appreciate going up there now. It's really been cleared out a lot, and thinned and pruned, and all that stuff taken out so that you can start to see the rows.

Hornback: One thing we don't know much about yet, we've heard that there're supposed to be really nice, are the lilacs that are down...

Ramondo: There was a big bush right alongside the house there. Is that still standing? Right here? In fact, there were two of 'em there. Are they still there?

Hornback: Yeah. They're getting' a lot of shade now, so they aren't blooming or anything, but...

Ramondo: Oh, gosh. Those blooms used to be beautiful!

Hornback: We heard that they were really nice; and that, possibly, he'd never introduced those. He'd never developed 'em; never got 'em up to the point of introducing them. We wanted to find out what's so good about them, 'cuz we've only seen a little teeny bit of bloom. They hardly bloom at all now because of all the shade from all the other trees growing up around them.

Ramondo: There was some lilac down in here also. Are those still there, or are they gone?

Hornback: I haven't seen them. They might still be there underneath everything. There are Hawthorns down there with great big, huge, red fruits on. And there's one real nice crabapple that's right, oh, about midway down in here; sort of in the center. It had large purple leaves and a dark pinkish blossom that's real fragrant.

Let's see, what else? There's a linden tree, some maples...

Do you know anything about that eucalyptus tree? We never found any records of it. It's a great big blue gum tree. It sits just to the side of the cottage.

Hughes: Did that come about as a shoot?

Ramondo: Gee, that was there when I...

Hughes: In '40?

Ramondo: It was a big tree then.

Hornback: That would tend to imply he planted it. If it was that size, back then... We just can't find it in the records anywhere.

Pernunski: It seems funny that he'd plant it.

Ramondo: Let's see. There was something else there now...

Hughes: Did horticulturists come periodically? You were saying that guy from the valley came for the chestnuts, but while you were there did people come by...

Ramondo: Oh, yeah. We used to get a lot of people in there lookin'. In fact, this used to be quite an attraction, the cactus.

Hornback: I've got to see if there's still any there. I can't believe they'd be gone totally.

Hughes: It seems that right along the property line, they'd have had to have gone out of their way to take 'em out; because there's still those quinces and there's stuff; and the road used to...

Ramondo: Does the road go right up to the...

Hughes: No, there's planting in there.

Ramondo: They might have bulldozed those out when they put the road in.

Hornback: There's a drop there...

Voice off mike: "Hi, George!"

Ramondo: "Morning, Walt!"

Hornback: When the chiropractor's office sits now, it's liked dropped from the elevation of the ground where the farm was.

Hughes: Right, but you were talking that they ran pretty much all the way back.

Ramondo: Right, there was one whole row of 'em there. I bet... I don't know who lives right there.

Hughes: The church is over there. The Episcopal Church, and then the chiropractor's is here.

Ramondo: There's a house right here.

Hughes: That's one over, I think.

Ramondo: No, there's a house right next to the fence line, here.

Hornback: I think that's gone, now. It was torn down for the chiropractors...

Ramondo: Well, he would have remembered...

Hornback: There's a water tank right about here, just over the fence line. The old fence line is still there, but the water tank has sort of fallen apart. The big wooden stand, that's still there, and there's a bunch of apples on that side of the fence.

Do you know anything at all about the Jerusalem pears? They called 'em mountain ash or, there's about three names for 'em. There's a ton of 'em back in here.

Ramondo: There were pears, let's see, where was that huge tree? There were pears right down in here. There was one variety... Most of those used to be tagged. They had the name of everything on it; but, of course, over the years, the tags fell off and they weren't replaced.

These pears here, they looked like—oh, what's the name of that winter pear that we have here now?

Hornback: Not Anjous...

Ramondo: Well, anyway, they were a winter variety. They got big and they'd keep for a long time. If you'd pick 'em and put 'em in a cool place, they'd keep for a long time! I forget the name of 'em.

Like I say, most of that stuff was tagged...

Hughes: Were they tagged with copper wires around the trunks and then a little copper tag off of that?

Ramondo: There was some copper tagged, and then there was some wooden tags that just had a wire through it and you'd just wrap it around a limb or something like that.

Hornback: We found a tag something like that on a walnut tree. It was a big English walnut, right around it here; and it turned that several of the branches on it had bronze around and then there was a thin copper wire hanging from that. One we found had a wooden tag on the copper wire...

Ramondo: Yeah, that's the way some of 'em were, and some of 'em had a little metal tag.

In fact, he used to, up in this, upstairs in this building here, he had a map of the whole place. He knew just where everything was.

Hughes and Hornback: (Hubbub) That's the map! It's the map! It's the 1915 map!

Ramondo: You got the map?

Hughes: Is it a great big map?

Hornback: A gigantic thing about six by nine (feet)?

Ramondo: Yeah! Everything was outlined on that map. He knew just where everything was.

Hornback: Who did the map? Do you know?

Ramondo: I'm sure he must have done it himself.

Hughes: The actual notations on it...

Ramondo: Um-hum.

Hornbeck: Do you know about when he planned the map?

Ramondo: No. Naturally, he was gone then.

Hornback: That was just recently rediscovered about a year and a half ago stashed up in the top of the carriage house in Santa Rosa. I was with the professor that discovered it. We unrolled it, and it was this gigantic map and we went crazy going all over it...

Ramondo: I used to go up and look at that map. If I wanted to see somethin' I'd just look at the map and I knew right where to go.

Hornback: It's so hard to find anything now. There was one and one only of a peach tree that stood right around in here somewhere. It's hard to see it in relation to the way it used to be, but as far as they way it is now, it was in between some of the buildings at Burbank Heights, and unfortunately that went last summer. It was clobbered. There was also one apricot and one pear right around...

Ramondo: There was one peach tree right down in here that was Mrs. Burbank's favorite. Nobody else could touch any of that fruit. That was saved for her. I guess it was one of Mr. Burbank's favorites, and, naturally, it was one of her favorites.

Hornback: His stock led to the development of the Elberta peach by Stark Brothers shortly after he died. Stark finished the development and introduced the Elberta peach.

Ramondo: I guess that was that one there. The peaches on that tree were about that big all the time. They were great big ones.

Hornback: You realize something with fruit of that size, for that period of time... It's not unusual now to see giant fruits, but back then...

Oh, the roses. That's what I wanted to find out more about. Do you know anything about those roses? There are a bunch of 'em that are along... Well, it looks like it was the old entry road, right in through here.

Ramondo: Um-hum. There was a lot of roses right in through here. Just before you got to the house here. And there were some lilac plants in there too.

Hornback: And there were some orange trees? A funny orange; the one that grows its leaves in the winter and it has great big thorns on it, and little tiny oranges. There's a small row of those still there.

Ramondo: There was quite a bit of stuff right in this area here. Back then somebody, I don't know if it was Mr. Kyle, after I left there, cleaned that out and took a lot of that out, and just kind of saved the fence there. But at one time that was just a mass of different kinds of fruit and whatnot in there.

Hughes: Maybe sometime we could go up there and walk around! If you have the time, because now that it's thinned out quite a bit you can really get around. It was really overgrown for a long time.

Ramondo: Right in here, as you came in the entrance, there were two willow trees here. I don't know whether he had developed them or not, but they were different from anything else I'd ever seen as far as a willow tree. There was two of 'em.

Hornbeck: They're still there.

Ramondo: Are they still there?

Hornback: At least one of them is. We weren't sure what those were. I mean, we knew they were willows, but we weren't sure...

Ramondo: Yeah, well, just right as you came in the entrance there, the driveway.

Hughes: See, we've been trying to work out an entrance way. I don't know if you've been reading in *The Times*, with the corporation and it looks like what we're talkin' about is a left turn lane only into here and a parking lot down in here, but if that happens it means the cutting of this bank over here which presents some obvious problems of losing some material, and that's what we're trying to hash out, now.

Hornback: What about the elms? Did he do any work with those elms? They're all over the place up there.

Ramondo: Yeah. It seem like that was one of his specialties. There used to be a lot of those. I think a lot of 'em have been dug out and cleared out. There were a lot of 'em in there, a lot of elms.

I could go up there and just point out just about where everything was.

Hornback: I'd like to see that. Then we could get it on the map and check back with the other maps we have that way; and get an idea what it was like. 'Cuz on some of the maps it doesn't make any sense. On the big map, the one that was in the barn, there's no indication at all of the chestnut trees down in here.

Ramondo: There was the one right close to the road here, and I think there's another one back up here, but the main ones was right up here.

Hornback: They're even there now, but they're not on that map; and they should be on that map. We figured it was about 1915 when that map was done, but there's no mention of them at all.

Ramondo: Are any of these chestnut trees still standing up here?

Hornback: Yes. There're two of 'em across the street from the cottage and then there're a couple more back up further in amongst the buildings.

Ramondo: Okay.

Hornback: The peach tree used to stand between the two chestnuts that are back up further—real old peach tree. It was the last one. I never saw any peaches up there at all.

Pernunski: Bob, what is this fruit tree here? I would say it's right about here. It's next to a dead tree, and I don't know what it is. It's very prominently outlined in blue tape.

Hornback: Oh, there's a little shrub. It's a growth from a shrub itself, and I can't figure out what it is. What had happened, is when we were clearing around it through there, we found that little shrub. It had some blossoms on it, but the blossom structure didn't make any sense in terms of anything we knew. It looked sort of like a blueberry type thing, or huckleberry, but, technically speaking the petals on the blossoms on a blueberry are what they call "fused,"—it's all one tube—but these were separate—but otherwise it's almost like a blueberry—so we outlined it, and saved it.

Ramondo: Back over here was a couple of rows of different varieties of grapes. Are they still there?

Hornback: There's one row of grapes that's right around in here. There's one row that sort of buried that back over in here. There's one row that way back way in the orchard back in here, too. Those are the only grapes we've seen. His map says that they were all along the fence line and in all kinds of places.

Ramondo: A lot of that, like I say, in later years Kyle came and cleaned that up, there.

Hornback: Do you know where the Shasta daisies were?

Ramondo: Yeah. Two different places. There was a row of Shasta daisies right down alongside these cactus; and then there were some Shasta daisies right in here someplace, and then there were some right up in here.

Hornback: We'd seen some pictures, but we didn't know exactly where they were in the pictures. Did you see any loquats? Were there any on the property?

Ramondo: No, but there were three or four trees of quince. Are there any quince trees?

Hornback: Yeah. Two different kinds of quinces—the green one, and the yellow. The green is, I think, the Aromatnaya quince and that's over in here. Then there's a row of Pineapple quinces running through here, and some more back along in through here.

We've heard there were loquats running from...

Ramondo: There was a—maybe it's gone now—but, right there where that big black walnut tree is, to the left of it over this way, there was a big quince tree. I don't know if that's still standing...

Hornback: I haven't seen it. There are apples there now, from the apple orchards, but I haven't seen any quince there at all.

Now, there's some chestnut seedlings coming up back in here approximately. The buildings that are there now end right around there, and across the road—it's their access—there's some fir trees, and there's this clump that looks like they may be seedling chestnuts or something like that coming up around an apple/cherry, something, I can't remember.

Ramondo: Those could be from those trees there.

Hornback: Right, the birds or some thing...

Okay, there was one plant right by the corner of the project. There was a big birch tree with a cut leaf, and there was one plant right next to it—you can see it in some of the slides—and it looked like somebody had trimmed the top of it and made a little umbrella

about that tall, but it stood just that side of the birch tree. I looked like it had a fairly broad shiny leaf on it, and I've been trying to find out what that was. Maybe we could show you some of the slides, too. It was in that one slide. It shows how really nice the cottage was...

Hughes: You know there's going to be, at the historical society Monday evening, there's going to be this movie. I don't know when it was made back in the '50's on Burbank, and it's showing live footage of Burbank with different people. You might like to see that.

Ramondo: Did Mrs. Horn ever get ahold of you? Do you know Mrs. Horn? She was telling me some stuff. Maybe it'd be a good idea to talk to her.

Hughes: She's here in Sebastopol?

Ramondo: She's out off Bohemian Highway.

Hughes: Cecil said that you might have some old tools around.

Ramondo: Yeah, I used to have a lot of his tools, but I don't know if I could find any, anymore.

Hughes: Well, we've got to get goin' here, momentarily, but maybe we could get together again and do it up there. Would that be convenient sometime? Walk around up there.

Hornback: It would really help me a lot.

Pernunski: It would help us a great deal also.

Ramondo: Sure!

Hughes: And would you spell her name?

Ramondo: L-A-U-R-I-E H-O-R-N and her phone number is 874-3144.

Hughes: Was she connected someway...

Ramondo: No, she's just—well, there's a lot of history behind her, too. That big ranch along the coast up there...

Hughes: Where Sea Ranch is?

Ramondo: No, the Calls. Remember the Call that died? Well, she's a Call.

Hughes: Oh, then she must be related to Mrs.—Mercedes that lives out on, ah—Mercedes Stafford. Her name was Call. John Stafford and Mercedes. They live out on Laguna Road, I think it is. Maybe that's her sister, then.

Ramondo: Could be.

Hornback: Did you ever happen to meet Mr. Burbank's sister, Emma?

Ramondo: No, not Mr. Burbank's. I knew Mrs. Burbank's sister real well, and her niece. Her niece used to live up in—oh, what's that big lumber area way up north?

Hornback: Scotia?

Ramondo: No, inland...

Hughes: Over near Redding or someplace?

Ramondo: Let's see. I should know that because I used to go up there fishin' all the time.

Let's see. I've got a map here. (sounds of map unfolding) Alturas! No, wait!

Susanville!! What am I talkin' about? She used to live in Susanville. (map is refolded)

Her sister was quite a woman. She could talk about eight or ten different languages.

Hughes: Well, maybe we could get together. Would a weekend be convenient or sumt'in'? Some morning or afternoon? And go for a walk out there.

Ramondo: Yeah.

Hughes: We'll set it up maybe a week ahead of time or sumt'in'?

Hornbeck: Is it possible that when you make arrangements you let me know? Would that work?

Pernunski: And let us know also.

Hughes: All right. All right!

Ramondo: But check on that row of cactus down there.

Hornbeck: Yes, definitely!

Pernunski: One more thing! Things are destroyed that you probably knew about so maybe you could show us where they were...

Hughes: Maybe not this weekend, but the next weekend. How's that? Saturday or Sunday? What's your preference?

Ramondo: It'd probably be best on a Sunday morning. If that's possible.

Hughes: Sure, it's possible. Say Sunday, 10:00-11:00?

Ramondo: Ten o'clock.

Hughes: Okay. So we'll just say meet up there in the visitors' parking lot at 10:00. Let's just see what the date is.

Ramondo: Why don't you call me...

Hughes: Well, we'll tentatively say Sunday the 22nd at 10:00 A.M. Okay, and I'll call you before to verify that that's still good.

THIS WAS AN INTERVIEW THAT WAS TAPED FEBRUARY 6TH 1981 AT 9:00 A.M. AT PELLINI CHEVROLET. THE INTERVIEW WAS WITH GEORGE RAMONDO. THE PEOPLE INTERVIEWING WERE: LIZA PERNUNSKI WITH *CIRCUIT RIDER PRODUCTIONS*: BOB HORNBACK, AND JOHN HUGHES. THANK YOU.

Interview with George Ramondo at the Luther Burbank
Experiment Farm: Sunday, February 22, 1981.

Conducted by: Bob Hornback, and John Hughes of WSCHS and
Liza Pernunski of *Circuit Rider Productions*

Pernunski: This is a map that she made. When was that? I guess in the early seventies.

How long has it been since you've been out here, George?

Ramondo: I was last here in 1958.

There was a—let's see, the old road came along in here—there was a row of bottle-brush right in here. And then right on this side of the house there, there was two bushes and then on the other side of the house there was about four more up there. In fact, right in here, there was a great big one that must have stood about 20-25 feet tall.

Pernunski: No longer!

Hornback: So this chestnut right straight up here would be one of the blight proof ones you were talking about?

Ramondo: Uh-huh.

Pernunski: Do you have any idea species the...

Hornback: Car comin'! (Car passes rendering some bits unintelligible.)

Ramondo: Right over by that tree there that has the lantern hangin' on it, just, oh maybe about 15-20 feet above there was the big caged tree I was tellin' you about.

Hornback: Was it the almond or the plum?

Ramondo: There was three of 'em in that one cage there. There was a plum, and there was an almond and a prune in there.

Hornback: We haven't checked yet to see if there are any of the spineless cactus still...

Ramondo: They should be... They were all the way across the bottom down there.

Pernunski: Is that where the road is there by Davis?

Ramondo: Yeah, that road' just about up against the line there.

Pernunski: When did Stark Brothers cease to have anything to do with the place?

Ramondo: They were still here in the sixties.

(Pernunski's reply is too soft for my equipment to recover.)

Hornback: Oh, with the thornless blackberries. I was curious about what you knew about where they were placed. We found about three different patches, so I'm not sure about...

Ramondo: There was—in fact, they're gone now. There was a row about right in here. And then, up on the ridge up there, there was about four rows or so up there.

Hornback: Yeah, we found one plant up there.

Ramondo: There was about four rows, and then there was, if I remember right, one, two, three rows of grapes up in there.

Hornback: They went the whole way?

Ramondo: Right. Right up to that old shed that's gone now, I guess.

Hornback: Was that the open shed you were describing?

Ramondo: Yeah. That was the open shed up there.

Hornback: That bit the dust this summer. Maybe I see what's happening...

Pernunski: I don't remember it being that big when you first showed it to me.

Hornback: That shed got whittled down pretty badly.

We wanted to find out, too, where the barn was. The big two story structure, we call it a barn out behind the house, was.

Do you know anything about these Catalina cherries along through here? These guys with the shiny leaves?

Ramondo: No, not too much.

Hornback: We've been noticing that there's a lot of variation from one to another in the leaves.

How about the Cutleaf birch? Do you know when it was planted?

Ramondo: I remember that was only about 15 feet tall. That thing really grew!

Hornback: There was debris covered up with the ivy. And there was also a clump of a cherry-like tree wedged in right next to it—it looked like a bird dropped a seed, and it got that started. Then we looked at some of the photos—from down there, back up here—and it's all sort of nice and the house is all back in shape and everything, there's a shrub right in about there with a rounded top, and I was wondering whether that was in fact the same kind of cherry or whatever it was that was...

Ramondo: Let's see. There was a big one about right here and another one about right here of ah, I don't know what you call them now... They have lavender flowers...

Hornback: Lilac?

Ramondo: Lilac! Lilac.

Hornback: The lilacs are all over here now.

Ramondo: They're all over there. Well, there used to be two big ones right in here.

Hornback: Humm! I wonder what happened to those? How weird!

Pernunski: Where was the famous cherry with hundreds of grafts on it? Or, was that still here when you...

Ramondo: Yeah. In fact there was two of 'em. There was one over in the --- side, and there was one right up here.

You keep talkin' about a barn, there was one right here.

Hornback: So these walnuts were growing along beside it then.

Ramondo: It was two story, right here. And the old open shed was right up there by the black walnuts, beside the black walnuts. And, of course there was cherry rows and grapes rows that run all the way up there.

Hornback: There's part of one of the grape rows right there. You can barely. There's a mound of soil there. There's another row of grapes way back up in the orchard, or what's now the orchard by that building there.

Ramondo: There was four rows of cherries that came down that way. And then right up there, where that one tree is, about maybe 10 feet to the other side of that was where the cherry was that had all the different grafts on it.

Hornback: Oh, I see. So, about where the road is now.

Ramondo: About where the road is there now.

Hornback: This walnut right straight down here that's kind of leaning slightly; that's the one we found that had the wire loops on some of the branches marking different, looks like different grafts, where the grafts that were put on it. We found one that had a little wooden label on it and John has that now, but it's barely legible. There isn't much evidence on it, but that really surprise me that...

Ramondo: And right up in there, I think it's in bloom now, there used to be a big cherry tree up there. See where that tree is in bloom up there...

Pernunski: There is something in bloom up there.

Ramondo: There used to be a big cherry tree there.

Hornback: I think they're all plums now. They're beech plum hybrids, and one or two apples, and ... a pear? Back in there? Remember?

I don't remember any cherries at all. OH! There is a cherry—a type of cherry—it has long leaf, slightly grayish color to it, and it seems to hold on to the leaves a long time. It's almost evergreen. They're sprinkled all in throughout, mostly back in there.

Pernunski: Do you know what's blooming right now?

Hornback: I think that was it. There was a type of cherry. In fact, there's a big one, I think, just next to the walnut that's right over there by the...

Ramondo: Also right over in there, it looks like it's gone, there was a couple of trees of quince.

Hornback: There's some right there, the green quinces.

Ramondo: Yeah, there's two of 'em way over there.

Hornback: Also I found one tree that looked like it was a cross between a plum and a cherry. It had real dark sweet fruit, spherical. Back up in through there. There was one plum that had a real scarlet fruit, tons of it all through the tree, not a very large tree; and next to it was this other one that looked like it was a plum-cherry cross.

Do you know what these are? I can't figure them out. They're just suckers that have come up but, from the leaves, I can't figure out what they are. They're real weird lookin'!

Ramondo: No, I don't know what this is. It must be some sort of...

Hornback: They're similar to this one.

Do you know anything about what he was doing with these guys—I've heard they're called Mountain ash, or Jerusalem pear, Sorbus? They have clusters of little green...

Ramondo: They never did too much with those, even when Stark Brothers were in here getting things for clients. They never did do much with that.

Hornback: It didn't seem to be very edible. Still there's some variations in fruit from one plant to another...

Ramondo: Right along the fence line between the Burbank property and the other property that was a row of grapes right along there.

Pernunski: There're some grapes still back behind that walnut.

Ramondo: They used to be all the way through there.

Hornback: Those are on that old map, the great big old map. It shows grapes all along the fence.

Pernunski: Do you know what this tree is?

Ramondo: No, I don't. Those willows there were four or five varieties there and the tags were gone. Mr. Kyle didn't know either.

Pernunski: How late was Mr. Kyle work here?

Ramondo: Oh, Mr. Kyle must have been here until about '62-'63.

Pernunski: Oh, really? Was he working for Mrs. Burbank?

Ramondo: Well, he was kinda takin' care of it for Stark Brothers.

Pernunski: I didn't realize he was here that long.

Hornback: When did Kyle die? I was wondering about that.

Pernunski: I don't know.

Hornback: There's a tree I've been curious about, right at the border; right straight off here; right at the border of the cemetery. It's a walnut, but it looks like a dwarf walnut.

Ramondo: Yeah, I think some of those there that are right on the line didn't belong to it. There are three or four there that are right on the fence line...

Hornback: They're part of the cemetery property? They have to be dwarf. They don't get as big as the other ones have. These have been great! Do you know the name of those?

Ramondo: There was a row of pears in here also. Have you seen any pear trees standing?

Hornback: There're some pears way up by the fence up there, little seedling ones; and there's one pear standing back in among the buildings over there, it looks like a little Japanese pear.

Ramondo: There used to be a whole row of 'em there.

(Consulting map.) These rows were close together. Some of the rows weren't even about four feet apart in there. That was a big problem with stuff in here. Some of these rows were only four feet apart.

Hughes: Did it seem that way to you when you worked here? Did it seem pretty small?

Ramondo: Oh, yeah. The rows were, like I say, about four feet apart.

Hornback: That's what the map shows.

Hughes: Does that mean these rows might have been removed with other material?

Ramondo: Yeah. In fact, I forget just what year it was, but they hired somebody to come in and just bulldoze a lot of this stuff out.

Pernunski: Did they? While you were here?

Hornback (incredulously): Stark Brothers?

Pernunski: It must have been stuff they thought wasn't worth bothering with...

Ramondo: Bothering with anymore, I guess.

Pernunski: They probably...(too faint to recover)

Hornback: George, do you know where the Shasta daisies were?

Ramondo: (Walking) Oh, yeah. There was a row of 'em right along side here and then over there by that eucalyptus tree there was four or five rows that went down there. The, on the other side over there, on the other side of the house, there was a row of 'em over there.

And then, remember I was tellin' you about the rhubarb? All right, right over there where that "Larry's Sanitary" thing is, there was rhubarb all along there.

Hornback: He was supposed to have grown fantastic rhubarb.

Ramondo: Oh, gee, that rhubarb used to be that big around and got that long, too!

Pernunski: What about those lilacs?

Ramondo: There was three of 'em right beside the house but they're gone. They were big, beautiful big bushes.

Hornback: There are some little teeny spikes on the purples and whites that are there now, but they don't bloom at all. There's too much shade.

(Consulting map) There's stuff written all over the place!

Ramondo: I think that's probably why they cleaned that stuff out.

Hornback: That, and the grass got really tall.

I want you to take a look at...(Walking) There's one tree here that I can't identify at all. It's really weird evil thing. It had small white blossoms in clusters that kind of hung down like little bells. I've never seen anything like it. It's a broad-leaf kind of thing. There's an old apple here and a plum or a plumcot, and an alder. Here it is right smack in front of us.

This guy...It has interesting branches and broad leaves on it. We couldn't figure it out at all. Have you ever seen anything like it ever?

Ramondo: I'll tell you. Everything in here was real interesting. There were so many different varieties of things that he was workin' on.

Hornback: Do you know anything about the wisterias? We found two clumps of purple wisteria, one over there and ..

Ramondo: Oh, right. They were down in that corner down there.

Hornback: And there was a big monkey tree like the one in Santa Rosa...

Ramondo: A monkey tree like the one in Santa Rosa? It was right around in here, someplace. It was right in here...about right here. I wonder if it died out and then they bulldozed ...

Pernunski: Do you know anything about that little tree at the end of the grandstand?

Ramondo: That was one of the cherry trees, I think.

Hornback: The plumcot's still got a few blossoms on it. (Walking)

Ramondo: It's really early blooming, pink flowers...

Hornback: It had leaves like the other plumcots. We were trying to take scions from it.

Do you know if these are the original trellises, or if they were added in later?

Ramondo: Those are original, there. Those are the originals.

Hornback: This grape, by the way, had forms where you could see he had been working on it.

Pernunski: Do you know what Burbank was doing with the mistletoe?

Ramondo: Pardon?

Pernunski: Do you know what Luther was doing with the mistletoe? Was he involved with the introduction of that or...

Ramondo: No. I don't think...

Pernunski: Does anyone know? It was an unusual thing for him to do.

Hornback: I heard a rumor that he heard about it and brought some in and it got away...

Pernunski: Curiosity...

Ramondo: Is that big chestnut tree still back there?

Hornback: Oh, yeah! There's a big one there and a couple over there.

We had some indications that this one here is a chincopin, by the leaves.

Ramondo: Right over there, there was two trees. They used to bloom about this time; solid bloom. I never knew what they were, but they never did have any fruit on 'em or anything.

Hornback: What color was the blossom?

Ramondo: Well, one was sort of a pink, and the other one was sort of more on the reddish side. They were right over in there!

Hornback: Sounds like a flowering peach.

Ramondo: No, it wasn't a flowering peach.

Hornback: Now up here, that tree with the light colored bark is the other pear. It's right up there by the fence, and the land just sort of drops straight down after that, down to the road.

Now, this crabapple, here. It looks like a Hopa crab with a reddish leaf and a few reddish blossoms, but it looks a little different.

Ramondo: That one there used to bear all the time. It was just...

Hornback: It has lots of little fruits and you can eat 'em right off the tree.

What about the persimmons up here? We've got one big Japanese type and it looks like a bunch of the American...

Ramondo: Oh, yeah, the persimmons. Right up there this side of that black walnut, there was a great big persimmon tree there. I see it's gone.

Hornback: There's a lot of fill stuff in there and other things. This has been disced almost every year, and we think it's destroyed a lot of the blueberries that used to be in there.

(Walking)

Ramondo: Yeah, there was quite a patch of blueberries.

Hornback: It kind of gets caught up in the Hawthorns and the elms at that end and get straggly out at this end.

People have been trying these fruits here, on the lower system, and they say they're almost seedless; that there's very little evidence of seed. Now, this one had tons of large fruits on it, the Japanese type. These are the Americans, the greyish ones. The Japanese are the big ones.

Ramondo: The roses are all gone down here, too, huh.

Hornback: Yeah. Those are all gone, but there are roses that start about here and run almost all the way up toward the cottage.

Ramondo: This was all roses down along here.

Hornback: There's some roses along the far side here. There's one rose that has a blossom about that big. It's a big, floppy, salmon colored petals; a real pretty one. I'm trying to find out what the roses are.

This one here with the little clusters of white flowers is like a multiflora, the species. It went all up in the trees and everything, all over the place. It covered up the orange trees. Those were almost invisible

Ramondo: You say there isn't any of the bottle brush back in here?

Hornback: None! None whatsoever.

I heard there were guavas out here, too; like the pineapple guava? We can't find those at all.

Ramondo: No, I don't remember any of those. Unless they were way, way before I...

Hornback: Do you know these guys here? I think they're some kind of nut shaped. They have big, purple, fragrant blossoms and a tall stalk. They die down to the ground and come back and grow about six feet tall. There's a big patch right over here.

Ramondo: Well, right in here he had a different kind of a lilac. He had in here, but they died out. He was experimenting on 'em. In fact, Kyle took real, real good care of those. But then, for one reason or another, they died out. I didn't know that there was any of 'em left. Right in here. I remember the flower used to be about that long on 'em. He had two rows of 'em right in here.

I'll say one thing. He utilized every space he could! He put things close together. Hornback: From the map, it looked like every inch was covered. You can't reduce those maps, or use them in pieces; on a smaller scale like this, everything disappears when you take it down that small.

There's a tree up here that I've been looking at with yellow fruits. I think it's a Medlew(sp?)—that's the best identification I have on it. It has a silver tag on it. There are two specimens. We have a small thorn and a little yellowish fruit, sort of like a loquat. It's in back of where the Hawthorns are. We're not really sure quite what it is.
(Walking)

Pernunski: We should ask him what this is.

Ramondo: This here? This was a pear. Wasn't it? A prickly pear?

Hornback: I don't know. I'll show you the fruit on it. Well, it's all over the ground. It's got this real weird little shape down here.

Ramondo: Aren't they shaped like a pear a little bit?

Hornback: More or less, yeah.

(General indistinguishable discussion ensues.)

Ramondo: He was experimenting on this, here, developing pears. There was a pear on the other side over there, that was a winter variety. They used to be about that big around!

Hornback: There's one over there now. It's a small, hard green fruit; like a small hard Japanese pear.

Ramondo: Oh, yeah. There was some of those over there, also. They was down in here.

Hornback: I'll get some fruit from this thing and show you. See, they're a little different, one from another.

Pernunski: What about the chestnuts?

Ramondo: Those chestnuts there, they were always big. They were just about that big then. Those trees are old, real old!

Hughes: These might be "prickly pear," in your terminology.

Hornback: They've got thorns on 'em. I'd just never seen a pear with that formation down at the bottom like that.

Pernunski: What formation?

Hornback: This thing. See the little holes in like that and...

Pernunski: All pears have that, don't they?

Ramondo and Hornback: It's not as pronounced.

Pernunski: When the fruit are that much bigger, you probably don't notice it as much..

Ramondo: We should see if there's any of that cactus down there.

(Discussion drowned out by footsteps.)

Hornback: These Hawthorns are fantastic with big red fruits on 'em, back in there and down in through there. There's still quite a few of those left.

Ramondo: It's a shame they tore that barn down where he did all his experiments.

Hornback: It burnt down!

Ramondo: Oh, it burnt down.

Hornback: Back in '75.

Ramondo: Because upstairs..

Pernunski: Was that the one by the house?

Ramondo: Yes, and upstairs was all kinds of paperwork up there and everything.

Hornback: I know! Gritting my teeth!

Pernunski: What year did it burn?

Hornback: 1975. Studies were done in '72 and '73. The corporation bought the land around '73. The barn burned down in '75.

Pernunski: That's the barn I'm talking about.

Hornback: All kinds of records in the barn.

I'm wondering about some of these oaks. How did they get here? Did they all start up since he died, or what?

Ramondo: Oh, no. They've been here.

Hornback: There's one pretty good-sized one down in amongst the pineapple quince by the house. I know he liked live oaks a lot. There are patches of 'em in the Santa Rosa garden. That's something we'd like to know more about.

Pernunski: Do you know the history of the elms down along the access road?

Ramondo: No.

Pernunski: Were they all about the same size when you were here?

Ramondo:: Yeah, yeah.

Hornback: What about the bamboo, the golden bamboo along the road here?

Ramondo: There was golden bamboo back through there: two or three or rows of those there.

Hornback: Was he trying to develop it or something?

Ramondo: No. I think he more or less planted those because he liked those. There used to be three rows on the other side there, but—I forget just what year it was—they put three or four drain ditches that went through there, and they dug 'em up to put the drain ditches there. If you look along the highway, you'll see where those ditches come out.

That area right in there was quite wet during the winter.

Hornback: I'm personally curious about how much the grade has changed throughout here. I gather that this is radically different here, because of the cut and the road. Then also, up where the road goes now, up around the house, it looks like it's really been graded differently, up around the walnuts?

Ramondo: It has. It has.

Pernunski: When was the cut made?

Hornback: This cut?

Ramondo: Oh, a good many years ago. A long time ago. That cut was made back in the '30's, I think

Hornback: It's a pretty deep one, too. If you look at where the grade of the land goes out and down...

Pernunski: What about wells? Were there any wells here?

Ramondo: No water, here. No.

Hornback: This was all dry irrigation farming?

Ramondo: Yeah. There was no water here. In fact, I had to haul water in here for the apples. At one time, there was a well, but it went dry; you couldn't get water.

Hornback: In Burbank's records he said that one of the things he liked about this property was there were a lot of different soil types.

Ramondo: Yeah, there is.

Hornback: I haven't seen that much variation...

Ramondo: Well, if you go way over there, in the other corner, it's real sandy! In fact, that lower end over there is real sandy. Then it gradually works up different and up in here you've got heavier soil, but right over there, that's real sandy.

Hornback: I want you have a look at what's along this plot side, George, along that boundary there, where you say the cactus were, 'cuz there seem to be some roses and quinces and blackberries along there, and some walnuts down right by the road.

(Walking.) There're a lot of blueberries still here. The fruit's real small on 'em now.

Ramondo: Yeah. See, the blueberries, now you can see how many rows there was, they were close. In fact, there was another row right here and down in here.

Hornback: Do you know what these shrubs are here? There's a row, but it's got a gap of about ten feet in the middle. They're right up near the oranges. See, these guys that run through here and then they disappear down into the roses and stuff there. I don't know what these are at all.

Pernunski: Do they have flowers?

Hornback: Small white blossoms.

Ramondo: I think they're sort of a flowering pear tree. I think, but I'm not sure.

Pernunski: Maybe we can find out.

Either one of you know just what he was doing with oranges? Did Stark Brothers ever do experiments on the property themselves?

Ramondo: No, they were just working on what Burbank had...

Now, this is an orange, here.

Hornback: These were completely smothered under big blackberries, black Himalaya berries. You couldn't see these and it drove us crazy because we kept reading records of oranges on the property but we couldn't find 'em. Then they bloomed and that's when we found 'em. We could see 'em coming out.

Ramondo: You can see 'em comin' out there, now.

Hornback: They're regal, these little guys; but the two trees seems very different in terms of the fruit. That has a navel and that has a stem, but they look like they go charging right back up into the roses.

Ramondo: There's probably more back up in there.

(Walking.) Now, that's not the original gate, there. There were about seven, or eight, or ten of 'em besides that one.

Hornback: When would you say this one was put up?

Ramondo: I'd say that was the last one put up there. In fact, I put that one up in...oh, '56, I guess. That was the last gate that went up there.

There was willows right in here.

Hornback: There's a couple of 'em coming up right in here. We pulled a lot of deadwood out of here. You can see 'em coming up through there.

Ramondo: Right in here, were two big weeping willows.

Hornback: You said there was another tree in a cage down around in here someplace?

It was the almond, or something?

Ramondo: Yeah. Right down around in here. Then right over there was where they had the three trees in a cage, and right over the hill there was another one.

Hornback: There was Pampas in here, originally, Pampas grass.

Ramondo: Oh, yeah! There was a row of it. I forgot about that! Yeah, there was.

Hornback: I thought I'd seem some.

Ramondo: There was some right over in there, too. In fact, there was a whole row of 'em right over there.

Hornback: I couldn't figure why the thornless blackberries and the bamboo were all mixing up together, planted so close...

Ramondo: These filled in later, 'cause these berries weren't here.

Hornback: Huh! Did the spread from somewhere else?

Ramondo: Probably from across, 'cause when I had the place, this was just bamboo.

Hornback: They've sort of taken over. They taste a little bit like a raspberry.

Ramondo: What happened was when they bulldozed that over there some of that soil got over here, and they got started, see.

Hornback: There appear to be little oaks right through here. They look like they're pretty much in a row.

Ramondo: He had a tendency to plant everything in a row. Even though they were close, he had 'em in a row, regardless of whether it was an oak tree or what it was.

Hornback: There's all kinds of stuff like that. I'll see 'em in a row somewhere. I wasn't sure, because a natural, a native plant, and the other stuff... How do you tell one from the other? Know whether he planted it or not?

Ramondo: Those big oaks up there. I think they were here even before he had the property, those oaks over there.

(Walking)

Hornback: They're things all along the borderline, all along there. I was wondering a little bit about this walnut down here, too.

Ramondo: That black walnut there.

Hornback: I'm trying to find out more about the walnuts.

This one rose is still very big. There are some blackberries in there. The little one had a real white blossom.

(Walking)

Ramondo: You say there's no evidence anywhere of the cactus, huh?

Hornback: Not that we've seen. No...

These are still here, these white lilies.

Ramondo: Oh, yeah, that's another thing I was going to mention. There was white ones and blue ones! There were about a dozen rows of those in here, white and blue.

Hornback: We found a big white one, but not the blue.

(Walking.) This has all been bulldozed.

Ramondo: Yeah! I'm not going to find any trace of cactus. Yeah, that's graded pretty strong through there.

Hornback: It goes pretty sharply down...

Ramondo: There used to be a fence line here.

Hughes: There was cactus growing all along here?

Ramondo: Yeah.

Hughes: Were there different kinds?

Ramondo: It was all one kind. It's all gone now.

Hornback: Back up there you can still see different stuff, by the old water tower, just inside the fence, as well as the old fence line, barbed wire and stakes...(Walking)

Some woman I talked to says when she was a little girl they would come up into this section over here for the apples, and these in here were different from the regular apples, special apples, like a Burbank variety. They had a different taste. We're trying to figure out where those apple trees would be.

Ramondo: Oh, I know what she was talkin' about. (Walking) They were right up in here. They were sort of a crabapple. They weren't, you know, a real apple; they were a crabapple.

See, this has all been worked, bulldozed those out.

There was a row of cactus and there was two or three rows of grapes all up through here. It's too bad those are gone.

Hornback: There used to be a washout here.

Ramondo: See, they must have filled this or somethin', all this in here. It was never like this when I was here.

Hornback: This is somebody else's apple orchard entirely.

Ramondo: Yeah! I'll betcha, if the original people still had that, I betcha they'd remember the cactus along there!

Hornback: (Walking.) There's one apricot tree, a good one, an old apricot, right by the central building there. Just over in there.

Hughes: They took it out.

Hornback: That's ridiculous! That was there this summer!

Hughes: It's gone now!

Hornback: It was right at the corner of the building there. Gone! Gone! Gone!

Ramondo: That's too bad!

Hornback: The pineapple quinces have quite a good blossom on, down here. I couldn't understand why he had pineapple quinces planted in several different spots on the property, though, if, indeed, they're all the same kind.

Ramondo: Well, I think the reason for that was he was experimenting with the soil here also, to see where they'd grow the best.

Hornback: Oh! Okay, 'cause these are beautiful trees.

Ramondo: You'll find that throughout the whole place here, with different plants.

Whether they grow better in sandier soil or in the loam soil, or whatever, see.

END OF INTERVIEW